



Making the Case for Food Barley

BY LAURA WILDER

There's a growing body of evidence that barley is a super food in improving human health. At the forefront of this effort is Dr. Corrie Whisner, an Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Health Promotion at Arizona State University (ASU). Dr. Whisner spoke at the 2019 Tri-State Convention in Spokane last November about her findings, and about making the case for food barley.



Dr. Corrie Whisner

Dr. Whisner is an accomplished scientist who has studied the human biome - the ecological community of commensal, symbiotic, and pathogenic microorganisms that literally share our body space. She has evaluated microbiota in the intestine, how gut microbes differ by health status and how microbiota functions to protect, nourish and strengthen cells in the body. According to Dr. Whisner, dietary intake is a major factor in gut health – with a grain-based diet offering superior gut health compared to a Western diet.

During her tenure at ASU, Dr. Whisner has become a faculty affiliate with the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center, a national Exploratory Center of Excellence on minority health and health disparities, as well as a Core Faculty Member of the Fundamental and Applied Microbiomics Research Center. In June 2015, Dr. Whisner was one of 20 early career professional inductees into the Dannon Institute's Nutrition Leadership Institute and a recipient of a "Diamond of the Department" award from her alma mater, Purdue University, in May 2016.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF BARLEY

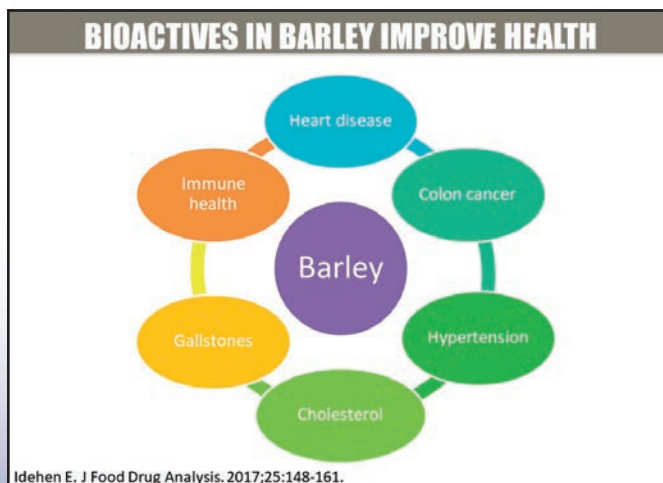
- Low in fat
- Low glycemic index
- Moderately high in protein (~10%)
- Packed with vitamins and minerals
 - B-vitamins
 - Vitamin E
 - Minerals
- High in fiber
 - beta-glucan
- Phytochemicals

“Digestive health should definitely be on every American’s mind,” according to Dr. Whisner. “Because the gut is the centralized organ that signals to every other organ in our body – what happens in the gut greatly impacts our disease risk.” “Barley is a carbohydrate-rich food loaded with fiber and polyphenols that feed our gut and get transformed into amazing molecules that can lower blood pressure, improve our cholesterol levels and reduce inflammation, said Whisner.”

“Barley is the most fascinating grain because it is unique in so many ways,” said Whisner. “Barley has more fiber than any other grain, and barley has more polyphenols than oats, wheat and rye. Furthermore, when you think about barley as a whole grain, a lot of whole grains are refined down to the endosperm which causes the loss of a lot of fiber and polyphenol content but barley is unique in that all outer and inner layers have about an equal composition of fiber and polyphenols so you can refine barley and still get all of the benefits of a whole grain.”

Whisner added, “Barley is really special in terms of beta glucans – it has exponentially more beta glucan than oats but has been greatly underappreciated in the American diet. There is a big opportunity for barley to be better placed due to these really amazing types of fiber.”

“Beta glucans are dietary fibers that are functional and have wonderful health benefits beyond just being dietary fiber,” explained Whisner. “Barley’s beta glucan fiber is helpful for lowering blood cholesterol levels and improving glucose metabolism which can lower the peak in blood glucose spikes after a meal where barley is consumed.”





For barley recipes and inspiration - go to www.eatbarley.com.

Whisner went on to explain that polyphenols are unique compounds found in plant-based foods including fruits, vegetables and grains with these diverse molecules including phenolic acids, flavonoids, lignins, folate, vitamin E and others, and collectively have anti-inflammatory properties in the

body. The polyphenols found in barley have these anti-inflammatory properties.

“Barley and grains are very important to the diet,” stressed Whisner. “Our bodies prefer carbohydrates as their fuel source, and when it comes to carbs, barley especially will provide us with a substantial fuel source that is preferred by our cells and provides them with a number of important functional food ingredients like polyphenols and fiber that feed the microorganisms in the gut doing more to help combat the inflammatory conditions plaguing the Western world. Adding more barley to the diet would see a decrease in these inflammatory conditions and better sustained health whether it’s weight loss and maintenance, managing blood glucose levels, or reducing the risk of colon cancer and cardiovascular disease.”

Now we know - besides being hearty and delicious, barley fits with the current food trends of ancient grains, transparent, high-quality ingredients, GMO-free, plant-based foods, sustainable foods, health and wellness with functional food ingredients, more dietary fiber and being good for the gut. Eat more barley! ■

CURRENT FOOD TRENDS SUPPORT BARLEY

Ancient grains		
Transparent, high-quality ingredients		
GMO-free		
Plant-based foods		
Sustainable foods		
Health and wellness (e.g. functional food ingredients)		
More dietary fiber		

Good for the gut microbiome!



FREE Financial Management Tools for Idaho Farmers and Ranchers Through University of Idaho Programs

BY SIDNEE HILL AND LAURA WILDER



Sidnee Hill-UI Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Program Coordinator

A new program recently unveiled by the Agricultural Economics Department of the University of Idaho Extension aims to improve the confidence of Idaho’s farmers and ranchers through developing financial management skills. Sidnee Hill, a rancher from the Carey area, will coordinate the new Farm Business Management and Benchmarking programs that are funded by a large grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

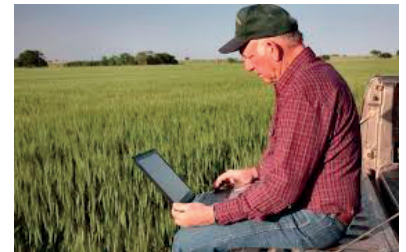
“One of University of Idaho Extension’s main goals is to

help Idaho producers succeed,” according to Hill. “This program focuses on financial success in two major ways. First, we are increasing the confidence of producers in creating and understanding their farm financial statements – not just to hand off to your lender each year, but to use them to really see your financial position and then make decisions that have major impacts on profitability.”

A recent study conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation in cooperation with the National Farmers Union, found 91% of farmers credit financial issues to be the main stressor, even to the point of affecting mental health (https://www.fb.org/files/AFBF_Rural_Stress_Polling_Presentation_04.16.19.pdf). Seeking additional education and training in financial management is an excellent way to feel more in control of the decisions and outcomes that surround you. Understanding your exact financial position can also clarify other opportunities on the production side of your business. “Making decisions without knowing where you are financially is like taking a walk in the dark: you are either missing opportunities or heading in the wrong direction,” said Hill.

The second portion is a benchmarking program that seeks to increase the representation of Idaho in some key, nation-wide tools. Financial benchmarks are often used by lenders, investment companies, and proactive businesspeople to judge the financial health and well-being of an operation. “In essence, we use benchmarks

to compare apples to apples. We can compare your operation to one of similar size and commodity to see if you are being both competitive and productive in your management practices,” explains Hill. “However, most of the benchmarking data used to compare Idaho’s farms is being collected from as far away as the east coast. If you have ever traveled to ag country outside Idaho, you quickly realize we all do things differently. We have our own unique challenges and blessings, even if we are growing the same crop. Gathering Idaho specific benchmark data is essential to see how Idaho is doing.”



To accomplish this benchmarking goal, extension agents are asking producers of all crops, and all farm sizes, to work with their program coordinator to submit their whole farm financial analysis into FINPACK’s data bank, FINBIN. “You provide your financial statements, and we will do the rest,” said Hill. “The financial statements will be anonymously submitted without any participant identifiers. From there they will be averaged with other producers to create the benchmark data. Producer financial information is strictly confidential.”

Both programs are FREE producers and come with an additional perk – FINPACK, agriculture’s premier financial analysis software, will be offered to any producer involved in these programs at no cost. Training and assistance on how to use the program can also be included.

“We are in desperate need of producers to help us in our benchmark program and want to connect those who want financial management assistance with this great opportunity while it is here,” said Hill. “We only have the grant funding for three years, so don’t wait or hesitate!” Those wanting to participate in either program should contact Sidnee Hill at sidneeh@uidaho.edu, 208-852-6160, or Ashlee Westerhold at Asheew@uidaho.edu. You can also visit their website <http://www.uidaho.edu/idaho-agbiz>. ■